كتاب العقل والجهل

Selections from The Book of REASON and IGNORANCE
USUL AL-KÃFI

AL-KĀFĪ

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the Name of Allãh the Beneficent, the Merciful

The Holy Prophet said:
"Whenever you hear about the good act and behaviour *(hal)* of a man, you should consider the goodness of his reason, since the divine rewards are based upon ones reason."

Abu ‘Abdillãh (AS) said : "The reasoning capacity is the chief pillar of human existence. It is the fountain spring of sagacity, comprehension, memory and knowledge. Man is perfected through Reason and it is this which is a guide, a discriminator and a key to every success. When Reason secures the approval of Divine Light, it earns (perfection in) know-ledge, memory, sagacity, level headness and God mindedness. It is through Reason one understands how, why and where. It is through Reason one knows who guides him and who misguides him. Having known all this he comes to realise what source of life he should adopt, whom he should meet and whom he should not. He becomes pure and sincere in his concept of Unity of God and also in his acceptance, and belief, and ultimately in His obedience and submission to Him. When he has reached this stage, he has redressed every loss. He has acquired every gain he can secure. He quickly comprehends where he stands, and what is what, which is which, and why he has been sent here in this worldly life, where he is brought from and where he has to go. All this can be secured with the assistance of Reason."

Amīr al-mu’minīn (AS) said:
"Hearts (emotions) of the rustic are instigated by lust. Their longings imprison them and their hearts are trapped into illusions and deceptions (of life)."

Is'hãq ibn ‘Ammãr reports:
"I inquired of Imãm Abu ‘Abdillãh (AS), ‘How is it that certain people understand much although I speak to them only a little? How and why is it that certain people understand, memorise and repeat to me the whole (subject) after I speak a lot. How and why is it that certain other people request me to repeat although I have spoken a lot.’ The Imãm replied, ‘The man who understands the whole (subject) after hearing a little is one whose intellect and reason is kneaded along with his gene. The man who understands, memorises and repeats to you the whole (subject) after your speaking fully over it, is one whose intellect and reason develops in the embryo of his mother. And the man who requests you to repeat the subject for him after hearing you in full, is one whose Reason develops after he is grown up."

"The messenger of Allah (S) said (to ‘Ali):
‘O ‘Ali, no poverty is as great as ignorance and no wealth is as profitable as the reasoning capacity.’ "

The Messenger of Allah (S) stated: 'Don't pride on a person performing too many prayers and observing too many fasts until and unless you determine what degree of Reason he possesses.'"

Is'hãq ibn 'Ammãr asked:
"My neighbour is the most devout in his prayers, in giving alms and in performing pilgrimages. Nor is there anything bad in his composition." The Imãm Abu 'Abdillãh (AS) asked ('Ammãr) about the kind of intellect and reason he has. 'Ammãr (the reporter) replied, "May my life be sacrificed for you, he has not (exploited his) intellect and reasoning power in religion." Hearing this the Imãm remarked: "His status (in the eye of Allah) will not be any the higher just because of his devout performances."

Abi'l-Hasan ar-Ridã (AS) observed :
"A believer in religion who has no Reason is of no consideration at all." The narrator asked, "May my life be sacrificed for you, there are certain people in our community who, in our eyes are without any fault, but they don't possess (sufficient) Reason and understanding (of religion)." The Imãm remarked, "Such people are not among those God has considered eligible to be addressed. When Almighty God created Reason, He ordered it to come forward. The Reason came forward. Then He ordered it to go back. It went back. On this, God the Almighty observed : 'I swear by My power and Majesty that I have not created anything more handsome and dearer than you. It is only on your account that I shall take people to task and it is only on your account that I grant My rewards.' "

Abu 'Abdillãh (AS) said :
"There is no distinguishing feature between faith and infidelity apart from the lack of reasoning." Hearing this someone asked the Imãm, "O' son of the Prophet, how is this?" The Imãm replied, "In-stead of turning to God, man turns to other men for the fulfilment of his needs. If he had turned to God exclusively, in all sincerity, God would have fulfilled his need much speedily than any man could have done."

'Ali ibn Abi Ṭãlib (AS) said :
"Jibrīl (Gabriel) came to Adam, and informed him: 'O Adam! I have been ordered to let you choose one out of three things. Therefore, choose one and leave the other two.' Adam asked: What are the three things?' He replied, 'Reason, modesty and religion (din).' Then Adam said: 'I choose reason.' So Jibrīl ordered modesty and faith to withdraw and leave reason but they said: 'O Jibrīl! we both have been instructed (by God) to remain with reason wherever it may be.' Jibrīl answered: 'Then that is your situation, and he ascended towards Heaven."

Abu 'Abdillãh (p.b.u.h.) said:
"Never did the Prophet of Islam address the people according to the full extent and depth of his own reason. (On the contrary) the Prophet used to say, 'We the group of prophets have been ordained (by God) always to speak to the people according to their mental capacity.' "

Abu 'Abdillãh (AS) said :
"The initiation, the development and the power of any task productive of any advantage cannot be undertaken without reason which has been designed by God as light and ornament for His creation. It is through reason that man recognises his Creator. It is through reason that they recognise themselves to be not self created but God is their Disposer and that they are at His disposal. It is through reason that they comprehend the object behind the creation of the heavens, the earth, the sun, the moon, the night and the day. It is through reason they realise that there is a Creator and Disposer for them, and for all the universe that has always been and will always be. It is through reason that they discriminate between good and bad. It is through reason that they understand that darkness (the evils) lies in ignorance and the light (every good) lies in knowledge. All these facts are known to men through reason."
It was asked of the Imãm, "Is it possible for the people to be contented with their reason leaving every other thing behind?" The Imãm replied, "Lo! the reason which has been designed by the God to be the foundation, the ornament and guidance is a light house for the wise, who recognise that God is the Truth and He is man's

sustainer. They realise that their Creator has His likes and dislikes and He could be obeyed and disobeyed. "They also recognise that- they cannot understand the manner in which His likes and dislikes operate with the help of mere reason. Hence, in this respect it is essential for them to take the help of knowledge. It means that they have derived no benefit from their intellectual capabilities. It is therefore imperative for men of reason to acquire knowledge and decorum without which their life has no support."

Abu Ja'far (AS) said:
"On the Day of Judgment, Almighty Allah will exact a detailed account from His servants, in exact proportion to the reason with which He had endowed them in the worldly life."

al-Hasan ibn al-Jahm said:
"I asked Abu'l-Hasan (AS) about a group of people that were among us who had love (for prophet and his progeny) but had not the resolution of will to confess the belief in his Imãmate. The Imãm replied: 'Such men are not among those whom God will blame (for their failure in finding truth) verily, Allah has said: '. . . therefore take heed, O you have eyes.' " *(al-Hashr, 59:2)*

The Holy Prophet (S) said:
"Almighty God has endowed upon mankind nothing better than reason. The slumber of the man of reason is better than the waking hours of the ignorant. Comforts of the stationary life of the man of reason is better than the movement of the ignorant. God has sent no prophet nor messenger without first perfecting his reason. And his reason stands superior to all the reasons of (the people of) his community. What the Prophet has hidden in his heart is better than all the striving after knowledge of those who strive after it. No creature of God can ever discharge his obligations to God unless he comprehends them consciously. All the worshippers taken together cannot reach that height of excellence in their devotion to God as the man of reason does. The men of reason who are the possessors of understanding minds about whom God has said, '... But none mindeth save the possessors of understanding minds." *(al-Baqarah, 2:269; Ãl- Imrãn, 3:7)*